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University of Detroit School of Architecture

Winter 1984 Volume 1 Number 1

The School Turns Twenty

The School of Architecture turned twenty-years-old this spring. A look backwards on this important birthday reveals the school is coming of age both in the soundness of its program and in the accomplishments of its alumni.

From Department to School

Historically, schools of architecture have their roots in engineering colleges. The University of Detroit's architecture school is typical of this pattern. A department of architectural engineering was established in the College of Engineering in 1923.

Then in 1960 Fr. Lawrence J. Green, S.J., an architect as well as a priest, became acting head of the department. He wanted to elevate the quality of the program and redirect the emphasis from engineering to architecture. He wrote a letter to Bruno Leon, a young architect and teacher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology whom he had heard about, and then hired Leon to head the department with a view toward making it a separate school.

"I was discouraged and ready to quit teaching," recalled Leon. "I thought the schools were too esoteric, too slow to change. Then one month before I quit I received the letter from Father Green inviting me to come and talk about the architecture department at the University of Detroit.

"I had all these ideas about education and here was my chance to pursue them. I figured I had to either come to U of D and do what I could or stop complaining about what was going on in the profession."

Under Leon's direction the department's curriculum changed. Before it had been similar to the engineering pro-



Students and faculty of the School of Architecture celebrated the school's 20th birthday in March with a cake and punch party.

gram. Students didn't study design until their third year. Leon started students in design during their freshman year.

The department became a separate school in 1964 and Father Britt, then president of the University, named Leon its Dean. He still is. And architectural design is still the hub around which the curriculum revolves. In 1975 the school became physically independent, too, occupying the old Science Building now known as the Architecture Building. The former laboratories are now design studios, the main lecture hall an exhibition space. This building is one part of the original McNichols campus built in 1927.

The mix of art and science has made architecture a "strange" curriculum that doesn't really fit in anywhere, says

Leon. But he and his faculty have tailored a school of architecture that fits the University of Detroit just fine. It is a small school allowing for intimate contact between students and faculty which Leon believes is important to the creative process. It is the only school of architecture at a Jesuit university and students benefit from the emphasis on liberal arts and values, plus the traditional Jesuit rigor.

The school's urban location illustrates all the advantages and disadvantages with which an architect deals. He and his students consider the city of Detroit their own private laboratory.

"Abandonment of our older urban

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Twenty years ago these five men transformed the department of architectural engineering into the present school of architecture. Pictured are Dean Bruno Leon, Bob Camblin, Louis Michel, John Loss and Jerzy Staniszakis. Leon and Staniszakis are still with the school. Camblin taught at the University of Utah and Rice University before becoming an independent artist in Houston. Michel has been at the University of Kansas since he left U of D in 1970. Loss left the school in 1975 to chair the architecture department at North Carolina State University. He has since moved on to the University of Maryland. The sixth fulltime faculty member instrumental in founding the school was Father Lawrence J. Green, S.J., who died in 1980.

For Making a Dream Reality

The University Honors Dean

During 1984 commencement exercises the University of Detroit awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters to School of Architecture Dean Bruno Leon. This is the highest award the University bestows. Leon is the first Dean in the University's history to receive an honorary degree while still actively leading his school. Because the presentation speech made by Fr. Norman McKendrick, S.J., former Academic Vice-President, so eloquently summarizes the history of both the school and its leader, we wanted to share this tribute with you.

The founding dean of the University of Detroit School of Architecture in 1964, you have built a dream into a reality, welding the ideals of a Jesuit education to technical studies to create — with your inimitable panache — a small selective School of Architecture committed to excellence. The school, which you have guided for twenty years now, clearly reflects your ideals as a professional and an educator.

You have always affirmed that architecture, at its best, can uplift the human spirit while, at least, it must respond to human needs. Acting on this belief, you have put design at the hub of the curriculum, while encouraging the students to develop their understanding of human

responses and to think for themselves — traits that distinguish graduates of the school and which have enabled them to become original designers, rather than just proficient technicians.

Through your efforts, the School of Architecture has earned a national reputation, attracting many of its students from out-of-state.

In turn, the impact of its graduates on architecture and design has been felt locally, nationally and internationally and is continuing to grow. As a practicing architect, you have distinguished yourself both on independent projects throughout the country and in collaboration with such notables as I.M. Pei and Buckminster Fuller. Your many contributions to your field have earned you recognition in reference works, such as Who's Who in America and Leaders in Education, as well as your election as a fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

For your extraordinary achievement as an architect and an educator, for the unique spirit you have instilled in the School of Architecture and for the special camaraderie you have inspired among the students and faculty, it is with great pleasure that we confer upon you the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.

The School Turns Twenty

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centers is not a reasonable concept," said Leon. "Modifications in the urban structures are necessary though, and one of the architect's most important future tasks. So we select design problems from the region for our students to work on."

There are also many restoration and new construction projects in the Detroit area for students to study as examples of that needed urban revitalization.

The faculty have played a vital part in the transition from department to school. They expose their students to a good mixture of architectural philosophies. There are part-time professors in addition to the full-time staff allowing the school the flexibility to add new perspectives and disciplines.

Alumni Advance Themselves; Enhance Their Alma Mater

All these qualities of the School have produced alumni who are now 'making their mark' and enhancing the reputation of the school. Leon proudly names several U of D graduates who hold important positions at major architecture firms in the Detroit area such as **Gino Rossetti**, founder and president of Gino Rossetti Associates, Architects and Planners; **Thomas Anglewicz** and **Al Bublys**, Vice President and Director of Design, respectively, at the Rossetti firm; **Andrew Vazzano**, Director of Design at Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates and **David Schervish, Stephen Vogel** and **Charles Merz**, founding partners of Schervish, Vogel, Merz and Cardoza.

And Leon emphasizes there are many others, locally, nationally and around the world. Some examples:

James Timberlake, formerly with Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown Associates in Philadelphia and now in independent practice, was recipient of the Rome Prize several years ago, a fellowship to study in Rome awarded to only one young practicing professional in the United States each year. Timberlake returned to U of D in the fall of 1983 as part of the school's guest speaker series.

After graduating from U of D's Architecture School, **Edward Popko** studied favelas, the South American junk tin houses, in Columbia for three years on a Fullbright Scholarship. Then he earned his Ph.D. in computer science from

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A Message From The Dean



Dean Bruno Leon

The purpose of marking anniversaries, such as the School of Architecture's 20th in April, is to remember the past, reflect on the present and plan for the future. We decided to institute an annual newsletter during this special year to help us do just that.

Alumni, many of you have kept in touch with us over the years and we are

always pleased and proud to hear from, and of, you. This newsletter will be our means of communicating your news and keeping you and our friends informed about the school now and in the years ahead.

We think the past twenty years have seen the creation of a unique school of architecture here at U of D. We have deliberately kept the school small to ensure the intimacy of contact between students and faculty which we feel is necessary for creative activity.

We emphasize design, problem solving and the liberal arts. We want our students to learn the technical expertise necessary to become top notch architects. But we want them to first understand people for whom their buildings will be designed and to acquire the clarity of thought necessary to work in a challenging profession.

The school has never espoused a particular architectural style; our students are exposed to many different philosophies thanks to our fine and varied faculty. We believe following trends can be contrary to the creative process.

Although content with the direction we've chosen, we are not complacent. Architecture is a rapidly evolving profession and we have many changes to make to keep up. But we're confident we

can make those changes.

We have a dedicated faculty teaching an outstanding curriculum that is training our students in everything from human values to the latest computer techniques used in architecture firms. The quality of our freshman classes, as measured in entrance exam scores and high school grade point averages, has steadily improved over the past five years. These facts bode well for our continued success.

In closing, I would like to remind our alumni and explain to our friends why the Nautilus, a mollusk with a spiral chambered shell that is pearly on the inside, was chosen as the School of Architecture's symbol. The last stanza of Oliver Wendell Holmes poem "The Chambered Nautilus" inspired the choice and beautifully explicates our dreams.

*Build thee more stately mansions,
O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a
dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's
unresting sea!*

One of the strengths of the school has always been the small, select group of students that choose to learn their profession at U of D. Their college entrance exam scores and high school grade point averages are significantly above those for the average college bound student. Pictured above are Mary Doll of Detroit and Alan Majeski of Muskegon, MI, both fourth year architecture students.



Life at The School of Architecture

In the Classrooms . . .

Although the number of students studying architecture has more than doubled over the past twenty years, the words intimate and creative still aptly describe the school.

Each student has his or her own studio space to work in and receives personal attention from faculty members. Only 70 students are accepted into the freshman class each fall. So the students grow close to each other as well as to the faculty. And these students are bright. For example, statistics for 1984 entering freshmen show:

- They average scores of 1034 on the SAT and 22.7 on the ACT, significantly above the averages of 897 and 18.5 for college bound students nationwide.
- Over half of the entering freshmen were in the top 25% of their class.
- 36% are attending U of D with the help of the prestigious Insignis or Presidential scholarships.
- They are a diverse group: 36% are from out-of-state, 25% are women, 18% are members of a minority group.

These special attributes of the school and its students have led to some impressive scholastic work. Under the tutelage of the former city planner of Detroit, AIA honorary fellow and current faculty member Charles Blessing, students have devised new city plans for downtown Flint and the nearby University of Michigan Flint campus, downtown Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Grosse Ile, as well as parts of the city of Detroit. Some of the plans have been featured at annual meetings of the Michigan Society of Architects.

This fall Blessing's students designed a marina complex on the north end of Detroit's island park, Belle Isle. Said third year student Teresa Merten, Buffalo, NY; "The project also included an athletic center and an outdoor theater. We visited the site as well as the Detroit Yacht Club to see how they are set up. Each of us designed the entire complex, not just one part. We were allowed to be creative and it was a fun project."

An important part of the five year program is the cooperative education sequence. Students are required to work in an architectural firm three full semesters, one in each of their third, fourth and fifth years of study. Only one other architecture school in the country (the University of Cincinnati) has this cooperative education requirement. During the past six terms, the Department of Career Planning, Cooperative Education and Placement has placed 90 architecture students with 62 different firms across the country.

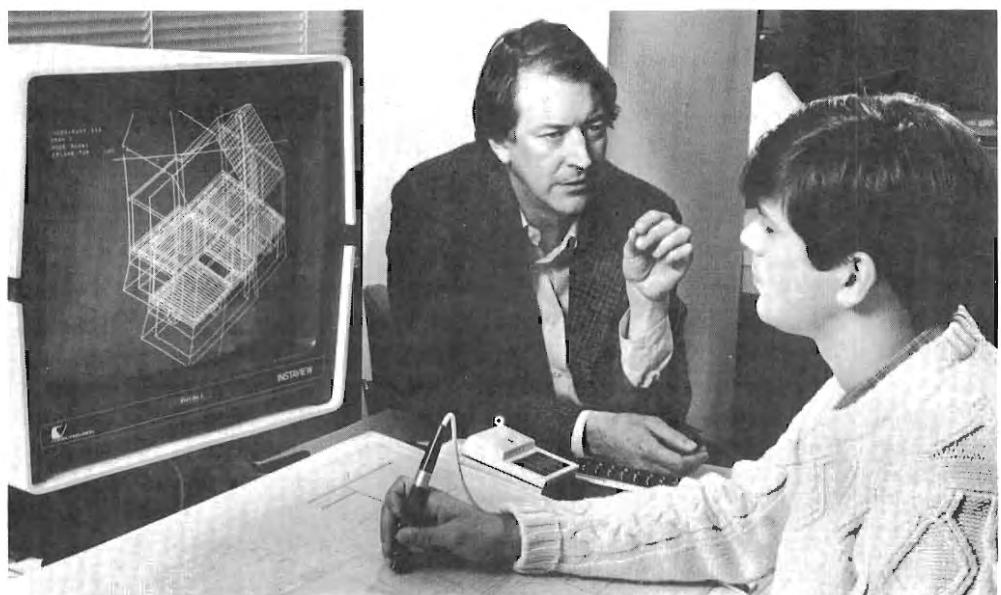
Fifth year architecture student Paul Britten interned with Kevin Roche, John Dinkelko & Associates and made working drawings for the CBS building on Fifth Avenue in New York City. "Creative problem solving is emphasized in the school," he said. "Because I had learned how to approach problems, I was able to do my job competently and

Another aid to students in their cooperative education, as well as preparing them for the future, is the new graphic computer program. Professor John Mueller said his students with this state of the art knowledge "are getting co-op jobs on the spot."

The \$850,000 CAD/CAM system (computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing) was partially donated to the School of Engineering by Computervision Corporation and architecture students began studying on the system last year.

Two semesters of CAD/CAM are now a permanent part of the curriculum. Sophomores learn the computer language during their first semester and then spend the second semester applying that knowledge to simple design projects and site analyses.

Mueller said that each student does his or her homework right on the com-



Fourth year architecture student Jeff Sharpe of Toledo, OH, performs an analysis of the framing system of a house with the help of Professor John Mueller and the school's graphic computer system (CAD/CAM).

make a real contribution, even though I had no experience. When I graduate this spring I'll not only have a diploma, but I'll have a year of experience with one of America's best firms."

puter, spending about six terminal hours per week in addition to classroom lectures.

"We explore issues of design not touched on in other classes," he said.

"And the tendency now is for large architectural firms to use graphic computers. Our students will have an advantage in the work market with this kind of experience."

The classic European buildings the students study in their history and theory classes are brought to life in the school's Study Abroad programs. Since 1981 the school has had an exchange program with the Warsaw Polytechnical University in Poland. The next group is scheduled to go during the winter 1984 term.

Last summer a new foreign study program in Florence, Italy, was established. This first group of fourteen students was led by Dean Bruno Leon and Professor Jerzy Staniszskis.

This full term of study included extensive travel to such places as London, Cambridge, Bath and Stonehenge in England; Paris, Versailles, Strasbourg and others in France; Heidelberg, Munich and Berlin in Germany; Athens and many cities in Italy, such as Milan, Venice, Sienna, Verona, Rome and Naples.

A few years ago several students started an internal newsletter called "Dichotomy." It has now evolved into a full-fledged journal of theory and criticism of the philosophic directions of architecture. The students not only fund this journal through a self-imposed publication fee, but they are solely responsible for its content and publication. Many libraries and other architecture schools subscribe to "Dichotomy", a measure of its quality.

In addition to all this work specific to the school of Architecture, all students must satisfy the University's Core Curriculum requirements. This Core is a set of University-wide requirements carefully crafted to teach students to think and express themselves clearly, to reflect on the meaning of their lives and the realities of their world, and to instill in them a desire to work for a more just society under God.

The design of the curriculum was considered by the Mellon Foundation to be

so distinctive that it awarded the University \$250,000 to complete and implement it.

The Core was developed after a year of discussion by faculty members and unifies the objectives of all the University's colleges. The School of Architecture's core classes emphasize the humanities

doors of both north and south entrances. This shell sign, properly called a nautilus, wasn't hung by high-spirited students. It's supposed to be there, it's the school's symbol.

Dean Bruno Leon devised the annual spring Good Grief Charlie Brown Kite Flying Contest at the same time the



Architect Maurice Sauriol discusses a project with cooperative education students Tom Ward, fifth year, Roseville, MI, and Fred Severini, a third year student from Roseville, MI. Ward and Severini gained valuable experience through their co-op jobs with Maurice G. Sauriol, Architect and Associates. Sauriol is a 1968 graduate of the School of Architecture. All the architects associated with his firm are also U of D alumni.

and the life and social sciences in the belief that architecture begins with a basic understanding of human nature.

Said Leon: "If we include those architecture courses that can be properly considered humanities, such as history and theory, over 45% of our curriculum is humanistically based."

... And on Campus.

The School of Architecture emphasizes design creativity rather than a particular architectural mode in the classroom. But students and faculty both exude a lively, personal style on campus.

It starts with the Architecture Building itself. A picture of a mollusk, a spiral chambered sea creature, hangs over the

school was founded 20 years ago. The kites must be designed to reach a height of 60 feet and then self-destruct in 30 seconds; magnificent failures in the true spirit of comic strip character Charlie Brown.

This year's 20th anniversary contest featured a papier mache human being with wings which was carted up to the Briggs Building third floor window and pushed out by an industrious young student in a last attempt to make it fly.

Other magnificent failures include four young architects pedalling a bike and flapping their homemade wings trying to fly; an unfortunate chicken who did fly in a gondola attached to a weather balloon, a cotton shirt with a necktie as a tail and a door.

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Architecture Professors Profiled

Individually their architectural philosophies are diverse and their activities outside the university range from designing award winning Burger Kings to solar churches. But collectively the nine full time professors and seven adjunct faculty members are dedicated, enthusiastic and a valuable asset of the School of Architecture.

"The collaboration and pride among the faculty is at a high level and, through the discussions held during Faculty Council meetings, they make a strong input toward the evolution of the School in all respects," said Dean Bruno Leon.

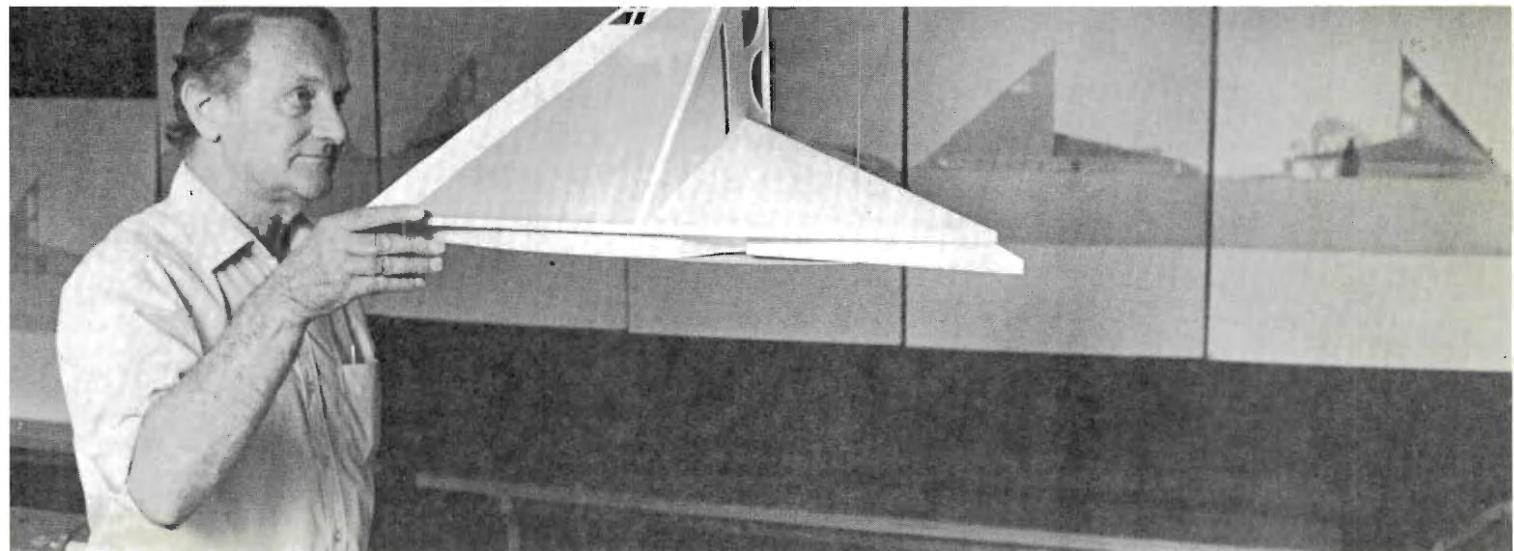
Nicholas Chatas teaches Design, Construction and Analysis. He is also an active architect with his own firm, Chatas Associates, and has been the designer and planner of many educational projects including the General Motors Institute in Flint which won two AIA Honors Awards and Dougherty Elementary School in West Bloomfield Township, MI, which won the National Education Building Award. He studied architecture at the University of Michigan.

Stephen LaGrassa, the School's in-house expert on solar and alternative

his work in that state.

Anthony Martinico, another University of Detroit graduate, has added a significant dimension to the school's theory program and he teaches design. For the last two years he has led an exchange program with the Warsaw Polytechnical University in Poland. The two universities exchange ten students and a faculty member each year.

Charles Merz, Design and Communication. Merz, adjunct faculty member Stephen Vogel and U of D graduate David Schervish are founding partners of the architectural firm of



Professor Jerzy Staniszks shows the model of a solar church which was the winner in a design competition.

All of the full time faculty are involved in outside architectural work either as freelancers, consultants or in a firm. The entire complement of adjunct faculty are also practicing architects or engineers.

The full time professors and their subjects are:

Charles A. Blessing, Urban Design and Communications. Professor Blessing was appointed by the Governor of Michigan to the Advisory Committee on Design Michigan. He also works with the Urban Design Committee of the American Institute of Architects of which he is a fellow. He is the former city planner for the city of Detroit. He holds degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Colorado, including an honorary doctorate in engineering from the latter institution.

sources of energy, teaches design as well. He received a fellowship from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture to attend the Sixth Annual Seminar on Energy and Design at MIT in 1983. LaGrassa is an alumnus of the University of Detroit.

Bruno Leon, Design and Structures. Leon was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, a lifetime honor for his outstanding contribution in the field of education. During the 1984 commencement he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by the University of Detroit for his twenty years of service to the school. He also recently designed and constructed a speculative house in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and has been published in New Mexico Magazine for

Schervish, Merz, Vogel and Cardoza. They recently won an "orchid" for Chene Park, a new waterfront park just north of downtown Detroit. This is a popular award given by the American Society of Interior Designers, Lighting Forum and the Michigan Council of the Arts. These groups take nominations from the public for the best liked and least liked new buildings or landscape projects, "orchids and onions." The firm also won an "orchid" for converting an old carriage house into their office. Over parents weekend this fall the firm received the Michigan Society of Architecture Honor Award for the Briarwood Burger King they designed in Ann Arbor, MI. Vogel is also a U of D graduate. Merz attended U of D but received his degrees from Wayne State University

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and today he is leading a division of IBM in Kingston, NY, studying application of computer technology for architectural purposes.

Graduate **Ziyad Zaidan** heads Ziyad Zaidan Associates, an international firm with offices in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; London and Athens. A great percentage of Zaidan's employees are U of D graduates.

Louis Gauci has recently been appointed resident designer for exhibitions and galleries at the Detroit Institute for the Arts. He will be helping the Institute prepare for its centennial celebration in June 1986. Although his post is new, he had been working for the Institute for four years as chief designer for the architectural firm of John Hilberry & Associates.

Leon said his past and future goals are identical: "I want to have one of the best schools of architecture in the country." By every measure — faculty, curriculum, alumni, students, reputation — he has succeeded.

Life at The School of Architecture

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Fifth year architecture student Paul Britten and two engineering students, Paul Sinelli and John Rhein, spent 30 straight hours constructing this 10-story high banner touting the Detroit Tigers, who won the world series, and General Motors as "Two #1 Teams." The students presented GM with an architectural drawing of the sign and detailed construction plans. Chairman Roger B. Smith approved their project provided the sign was ready by the first World Series game played in Detroit. The banner was unfurled on time and in this photo Smith (second from right) congratulates (l to r) Britten, Sinelli and Rhein on a job well done. Make that Three #1 Teams, guys.

and the Cranbrook Academy of Architecture.

John Mueller teaches computer-aided design. He is now completing an architectural study for the Center for Creative Studies on space allocation. Mueller studied architecture at the University of Detroit.

Jerzy Staniszakis, Design and Communication. He received a grant in 1978 from the Michigan Council for the Arts for a project he called Urban Surgery that proposed to link Detroit and Windsor with a pedestrian bridge across the Detroit River and which was displayed at the Governors' Conference on Urban Problems that year. The following year he received another grant from the arts council which he used to create a model for downtown Detroit. His design would change the city's emphasis from the car to pedestrians by converting hundreds of street level parking lots into green areas. He also won a competition for a Catholic Church which employed solar energy and demonstrated his exemplary design ability. He received his degrees from the Polytechnical University in Warsaw, Poland.

Robert Tucker teaches Design and Structures and recently gained some "hands-on" building experience by helping Dean Leon construct his New Mexican desert home. Tucker has acted as consultant or director to several non-profit organizations devoted to developing low cost housing, most recently a housing rehabilitation project for Detroit's Cass Corridor. He studied architecture at North Carolina State University.

The adjunct faculty includes: James E. Coffey, Jr., Structures; Michael Hooker, Environmental Technology, Electrical; Al Knauber, Environmental Technology HVAC, Plumbing; Thomas O'Connor, Construction; Stephen Vogel, History and Theory; James M. Weeks, Communication; and Paul Reehil, Legal Aspects. In addition, Professor Sarah Gravelle of the Liberal Arts College teaches in the History and Theory sequence.

Another student event inspired by a faculty member was the Stephen LaGrassa Most Ugly Tie Contest held at the all-campus 20th anniversary cake and punch party this year. Both handmade and store bought wild and colorful ties vied for this coveted design award. To demonstrate the functionality of these loud pieces of clothing, students often modeled their ties in mock striptease routines.

One of the zaniest antics happened last spring when students filled Leon's office with 200 live rabbits. The room was given a party mood with balloons and ribbons, but the rabbits refused to wear their party hats.

"The rabbits were on the floor, on my desk, everywhere," Leon recalled. "It was a surrealistic experience."

Besides the famous Charlie Brown Kite Contest, the Student Chapter of the American Institute of Architects sponsors a Beaux Arts Ball each year. This costume ball is usually held around April Fools Day. This year alumni will be invited to attend once a time and place have been scheduled.

nautilus notes

Friends and alum*hi* are invited to subscribe to the annual School of Architecture publication "Dichotomy" at a special rate of \$3.50. The journal explores architectural philosophies. Editor Ed Klimek said the theme for 1985 is "the emerging American city," how urban space is being used under current social constraints. The journal will focus on the future and such architects as Paolo Soleri and F. Buckminster Fuller as well as taking a look at past urban renewal projects. To subscribe contact Ed Klimek, School of Architecture, University of Detroit, 4001 W. McNichols, Detroit, MI 48221.

* * *

During Thanksgiving week, the School of Architecture co-sponsored the Association of Student Chapters/American Institute of Architects Forum '84. Forum is an annual conference organized by architecture students to enable them to meet each other and to learn more about their profession. The convention was held in Ann Arbor, MI. However, third year architecture student Teresa Merten, as co-chair of the convention, arranged a one-day tour of the city of Detroit for the 400 students. They visited outstanding buildings and toured several architecture firms. Ms. Merten arranged buses, made certain that the buildings they visited were open and arranged for two receptions, one at Cranbrook, a second at Beaubien House. In order to co-sponsor this year's convention, Ms. Merten presented a pro-

posal to last year's convention which was approved by a vote of students attending. To help raise the money to finance the one-day Detroit tour, she organized a phonathon earlier this term.



Patricia Martinico

Patricia Martinico was named Assistant Dean for Administration, School of Architecture, on July 1. Her promotion from Administrative Assistant brings her no new duties; the title reflects the work she has already been performing for the school.

Ms. Martinico began as assistant secretary to the Dean in 1968 and has steadily taken on more responsibilities until now she oversees the day to day operations of the school and building.

Dean Bruno Leon said, "Pat has freed me from the paper pushing. She's dependable, thorough, loyal to the spirit of the school with a full understanding of its goals. She is marvelous with the students. I'm delighted with her promotion."

* * *

The School of Architecture has been reaccredited for another five years, the longest term allowed, by the National Architectural Accrediting Board. The NAAB is the only accrediting agency for architecture in the United States.

* * *

In conjunction with the 20th Anniversary celebration last spring, the School hosted an exhibition of the works of international architect Renzo Piano. Italian born Piano is most well known for his controversial Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris, an ultra modern super structure serving as an art and cultural center. The exhibit included photographs, scale models and video films.

* * *

The School gratefully acknowledges the recent significant donation of books to the Architectural Learning Resource Center from the library of Smith, Henchman and Grylls, architects. The Learning Resource Center has been the number one priority of the School's fundraising efforts. Donations of books and funds are still needed.

* * *

Mark Dietrick of Butler, PA, won the Henry Adams Medal during 1984 commencement exercises. This prize, popularly called the AIA Student Gold Medal, is awarded by the faculty to the best all around graduating senior for scholastic achievement, leadership and promise of professional ability. The AIA allows each accredited architectural school to present one medal each year.



University of Detroit
School of Architecture
4001 W. McNichols
Detroit, Michigan 48221

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